Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

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Assessment of Chinese Learning in Higher Education: A Study in Portugal and China

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Abstract

This thesis reports on research on assessment of student learning of Chinese in higher education. This thesis draws upon earlier empirical work (Pereira, 2011; Pereira and Flores, 2013) on assessment in Higher Education carried out in the Portuguese context. In this research a different perspective was undertaken. This research relates to the Chinese context, but it also aims at contrasting the views of Chinese and Portuguese students in regard to assessment of Chinese learning. The main goal is to get to know higher education students' perspectives about assessment, particularly in regard to methods of assessment most used in higher education; the potential and difficulties in putting into practice the assessment process and the relationship between assessment and learning taking into from the perspective of students. To achieve this, an exploratory study was chosen.

A questionnaire was used for data collection. The participants were 56 students from two universities (Nankai University, China and Minho University, Portugal). Data were analyzed according to frequencies and percentages.

Finding show that the students do the traditional assessment (exam/test) frequently, but they do not hate it. Also, they think the traditional assessment (exam/test) can make the assessment process fairer. In addition, students want the teacher to use more than one assessment methods and use the same criteria to assess their learning. Differences were also found in regard to the differences between Portuguese and Chinese students' perceptions about assessment. For instance, students in Portugal pay more attention to the scientific and continuous dimension of assessment rather than their Chinese counterparts. However, Chinese students pay more attention to diversity of the assessment methods than Portuguese students.

Keywords: assessment; Chinese learning; higher education

Resumo

Esta tese baseia-se em trabalhos empíricos anteriores (Pereira, 2011; Pereira e Flores, 2013) na avaliação do Ensino Superior realizado no contexto português. Optámos por uma perspectiva e um campo de pesquisa diferentes. A minha perspectiva, assim como o meu campo de pesquisa, relacionam-se com o contexto chinês, mas também visam comparar as opiniões dos estudantes chineses e portugueses no que toca à avaliação da aprendizagem em chinês. Esta tese incide sobre a avaliação dos estudantes em chinês no Ensino Superior. O principal objectivo consiste em conhecer as percepções dos estudantes sobre a avaliação, especialmente sobre os métodos de avaliação mais utilizados no Ensino Superior, bem como as suas potencialidades e as dificuldades na operacionalização do processo de avaliação, e a relação entre a avaliação e a aprendizagem tendo em conta a perspectiva dos estudantes.

Os dados foram recolhidos com base em questionários de modo a obter dados junto de 56 estudantes de duas universidades (Universidade de Nankai, na China, e Universidade do Minho, em Portugal). Neste trabalho analisamos os dados e discutimos os resultados, comparando ainda as percepções dos estudantes dos dois países.

Os resultados indicam que o principal método de avaliação é o tradicional exame ou teste. Os participantes não levam problemas em relação a esta opção, pois consideram que a avaliação tradicional (exame / teste) pode tornar o processo de avaliação mais justo. Também sugerem que os professores devem usar mais de um que método de avaliação e utilizar os mesmos critérios para avaliar a sua aprendizagem.

Foram encontradas diferenças entre as percepções dos estudantes portugueses e chineses. Por exemplo, os primeiros valorizam mais a dimensão científica e contínua da avaliação em detrimentos dos seus colegas chineses. Por outro lado, os estudantes da China reconhecem mais a diversidade de técnicas de avaliação do que os participantes portugueses.

Palavras-chave: avaliação; aprendizagem do chinês; Ensino Superior

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Introduction

1. The Context and Focus of the Research

This thesis draws upon earlier empirical work (Pereira, 2011; Pereira and Flores, 2013) on assessment in Higher Education carried out in the Portuguese context. But the perspective and field of the research is different. The perspective and field of my research relates to the Chinese context, but it also aims at contrasting the views of Chinese and Portuguese students in regard to assessment of Chinese learning.

For most people, the Chinese learning is still an unfamiliar area of research, a lot of people do not know much about Chinese learning, let alone Assessment of Chinese Learning; it has received little attention in research literature.

This thesis reports on research on assessment of student learning of Chinese in higher education. The main goal is to get to know higher education students' perspectives about assessment, particularly in regard to methods of assessment most used in higher education; the potential and difficulties in putting into practice the assessment process and the relationship between assessment and learning from the perspective of students. Data were collected through a questionnaire to the students in Nankai University (Chinese university) and Minho University (Portuguese university).

Assessment has received a growing attention from the part of educational researchers over the years, and more recently, within the context of higher education. As Rowntree (1987: 1) states, “if we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look at its assessment procedures”. Thus, assessment defines what students regard as important, how they spend their time, and how they

come to see themselves as students. (Brown & Knight, 1994). So, it is important to get to know students' perceptions about assessment and its connection with learning.

2. The Nature of the Study

Research in education has shown the characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism, which considers the objective reality; the qualitative paradigm is a response to the limitations expressed by quantitative methods and it focus on interpretation (Guba, & Lincoln, 1994).

One of the main aspects of the quantitative investigation is to determine to what extent the results are generalizable to the population, leading to the use of some sophisticated techniques to be selected, and at the same time dimensioning the experimental samples.

Quantitative methods allow obtaining data on a wide range of people for a specific predetermined number of questions. It is through statistical methods that data can be synthesize from a large sample and generalized to the entire population, which is their main goal.

According to Fernandes (1991), the main objective of quantitative research is to determine the extent to which the results are generalizable. This model has as priorities quantification, accuracy, and the precision measurement.

Due to a number of constraints, an exploratory study was carried out. According Blumer (1969, p. 40) in Corbin & Strauss (2008, p. 65), "The purpose of an exploratory study is to move toward a clearer understanding of how one ś problem to be posed, to learn what are the appropriate data, to develop ideas of what are significant lines of relation and to evolve one ś conceptual tools in the light of what one is learning area of life".

In total, there are 56 students participated in the questionnaire survey. All of the students came from two universities: Nankai University (Chinese university)

and Minho University (Portuguese university). And most of the students are from the first form and the second form.

This thesis in organized in three chapters and it also includes the introduction and conclusion. Chapter I deals with the literature review. It addresses the issues of "what is the assessment", "purpose of assessment", "modes of assessment" and "methods of assessment". Chapter II introduces the research design. It focuses upon the "research objectives", "nature of the study", "method for data collection", "participants" and "limitations". Chapter III presents the findings from the questionnaire. In accordance with the order of questions, firstly, I show the findings from the questionnaire filled in by Portuguese students. Secondly, I show the findings from the questionnaire filled in by Chinese students. At last I compare and contrast them. The thesis ends with the conclusions and then I put forward some suggestions and recommendations arising from the findings.

CHAPTER I

Assessment in Higher Education

In this chapter I draw on existing literature to identify the key characteristics of assessment. In particular, I look at the key definitions of assessment and its key dimensions and key purpose. In addition to these, I look at the key definitions and characteristics of the modes of assessment, included formative and summative assessment. At last, I look at the key characteristics and effects assessment methods, included traditional and alternative methods of assessment.

1.1 Defining Assessment

Assessment in higher education always refers to the Educational assessment. Educational assessment is the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (Resnick & Resnick, 1992). Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the learning community (class, workshop, or other organized group of learners), the institution, or the educational system as a whole. (Reviewed by Michael H. Parsons, Ed.D, 2000)

We can also say that educational assessment is the process that is based on certain educational values or educational goals using feasible scientific methods, through the systematic collection and analysis of information collation, on educational activities, educational processes and educational outcomes for value judgments, and in order to improve the quality of education and educational decisions (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2005).

Assessment includes the activities of a value judgment; it is the judgment of object that required meeting the subject (Black et al, 2012). Assessment is the activities that make judgment about the degree of the educational activities to meet the individual needs of society. It is the process that make judgment about the value of educational activities, it is the reality (already made) or potential (not yet available, but may be made), in order to achieve educational value-added process. (Tanaka Koji, 2011)

1.1.1 Key Dimensions of Assessment

The characteristics related to assessment are: (1) Educational assessment is a process, it is an active process contained certain procedures and systems. (2) Educational assessment as the basis at certain educational goals or certain educational values. (3) Educational assessment as the core to the object of the evaluation function, status and effectiveness of value judgments. (4) Educational assessment as a method in scientific evaluation methods, techniques. (5) The ultimate goal of educational assessment is to continuously improve the evaluation object behavior, improve the quality of education for educational decision-making. (Bloom, 1971). The literature also indicates the general steps used to carry out an assessment process: (1) Determine the objectives of analysis and evaluation specify evaluation program, do a good job in evaluation of the preparatory work; (2) Select the evaluation start time, collect evaluation object information and arrange it; (3) Analyze and evaluate information to create evaluation conclusion; (4) According to the evaluation results, improve the behavior for achieving the desired goals. (Williams, 1992).

1.1.2 Purpose of Assessment

A look at the general literature on evaluation and assessment identifies a number of key issues:

(1) Management staff provided human and financial resources for the education; they want to know whether their plans are carried out smoothly or not, the only way is to understand students' learning in the curriculum implementation situation. If the results of the assessment and their expectances are different, they will adjust their plans for the complete the task better in the future (Zhenguo, 2000).

(2) After the teachers implemented the managements' plans, they want to know in the process of teaching what they did, what will do next; students have mastered or can do something; or don't know or cannot do something (Lan, 1999)

(3) There is no one more than parents would want to know their children's situations in school. The parents can not see the performance of students in the class, they need to get the feedback of their children's performance from the schools and teachers give them. (Dina, 1995).

(4) Finally if the students they want to know the situation about completion of the task, they want to know what will do in the future, and they can gain confidence and satisfaction from their success (Shiying, 1999).

The final purposes and assessment practices in education depend on the theoretical framework of the practitioners and researchers, their assumptions and beliefs about the nature of human mind, the origin of knowledge and the process of learning (Scouller, 1998).

1.2 Modes of Assessment

Assessment can be done at various times throughout a program and a comprehensive assessment plan will include formative and summative assessment (Calderhead, 1996). The point at which the assessment occurs in a program distinguishes these two categories of assessment (Sadler, 1998).

1.2.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is often done during a program, thus providing the opportunity for immediate evidence and feedback for student learning in a particular course or at a particular point in a program (Black et al, 2002). Classroom assessment is one of the most common formative assessment techniques. The purpose of this technique is to improve quality of student learning and should not be evaluative or involve grading students (Black & William, 1998). This can also lead to curricular modifications when specific courses have not met the student learning outcomes (Crooks, 1988). Classroom assessment can also provide important program information when multiple sections of a course are taught

because it enables programs to examine if the learning goals and objectives are met in all sections of the course. (Black & William, 1998) It also can improve instructional quality by engaging the faculty in the design and practice of the course goals and objectives and the course impact on the program.

Formative assessment is generally carried out throughout a course or project. Formative assessment, also referred to as "educative assessment," is used to aid learning (Nyquist, 2003). In an educational setting, formative assessment might be a teacher (or peer) or the learner, providing feedback on a student's work and would not necessarily be used for grading purposes (Natriello, 1987). Formative assessments can take the form of diagnostic, standardized tests.

1.2.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is comprehensive in nature, provides accountability and is used to check the level of learning at the end of the program. For example, if upon completion of a program students will have the knowledge to pass an accreditation test, taking the test would be summative in nature since it is based on the cumulative learning experience (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2009). Program goals and objectives often reflect the cumulative nature of the learning that takes place in a program (Daniel, 2009). Thus the program would conduct summative assessment at the end of the program to ensure students have met the program goals and objectives (JISC). Attention should be given to using various methods and measures in order to have a comprehensive plan. Ultimately, the foundation for an assessment plan is to collect summative assessment data and this type of data can stand-alone. Formative assessment data, however, can contribute to a comprehensive assessment plan by enabling faculty to identify particular points in a program to assess learning (i.e., entry into a program, before or after an internship experience, impact of specific courses, etc.) and monitor the progress being made towards achieving learning outcomes (Vergis & Hardy, 2010).

Summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a course or project

(Moskal, Barbara & Leydens, 2000). In an educational setting, summative assessments are typically used to assign students a course grade. Summative assessments are evaluative.

1.2.3 Synthesis – Formative and Summative Assessment

When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative. When the guests taste the soup, that's summative (Scriven, 1991).

Summative and formative assessments are often referred to in a learning context as assessment of learning and assessment for learning respectively. Assessments of learning is generally summative in nature and intended to measure learning outcomes and report those outcomes to students, parents and administrators. Assessment of learning generally occurs at the conclusion of a class, course, semester or academic year. Assessment for learning is generally formative in nature and is used by teachers to consider approaches to teaching and next steps for individual learners and the class (Lorma, 2003).

A common form of formative assessment is diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment measures a student's current knowledge and skills for the purpose of identifying a suitable program of learning. Self-assessment is a form of diagnostic assessment which involves students assessing themselves. Forward-looking assessment asks those being assessed to consider themselves in hypothetical future situations (Daniel, 2009)

Performance-based assessment is similar to summative assessment, as it focuses on achievement. It is often aligned with the standards-based education reform and outcomes-based education movement (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 1995). Though ideally they are significantly different from a traditional multiple choice test, they are most commonly associated with standards-based assessment which uses free-form responses to standard questions scored by human scorers on a standards-based scale, meeting, falling below or exceeding a performance standard rather than being ranked on a curve (Stinggins, 2004). A well-defined task is

identified and students are asked to create, produce or do something, often in settings that involve real-world application of knowledge and skills. Proficiency is demonstrated by providing an extended response (Hough, 1992). Performance formats are further differentiated into products and performances. The performance may result in a product, such as a painting, portfolio, paper or exhibition, or it may consist of a performance, such as a speech, athletic skill, musical recital or reading (Costa, 1992).

According to different purposes, assessments can be classified into formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment is to diagnose learners' learning process, information from which can be used by teachers as the basis for further work. Summative assessment is intended to measure learners' achievement (Eder & Ferris, 1989). A clear comparison of the two kinds of assessment is illustrated in the following table.

Table 1- Formative Assessment versus Summative Assessment

Formative assessment:	Summative assessment:
- is prepared and carried out by the class teacher as a routine part of teaching and learning - is specifically related to what has been taught, i.e. content is in harmony with what has been taught - the information from the assessment is used diagnostically; it is focused on the individual learner's specific strengths and weaknesses, needs, etc.	- is not necessarily prepared and carried by the class teacher - does not necessarily relate immediately to what has been taught - the judgment about a learner's performance is likely to feed into record-keeping and be used for administrative purposes, e.g. checking standards and targets - is frequently externally imposed, e.g. by an institution or a ministry of education.

(Taken from Hedge who quoted Dickin 2000: p. 377)

1.3 Methods of Assessment

There is a wide array of methods of assessment ranging from the so-called more traditional methods and the new or alternative methods. In this section, I will focus on the methods for assessing student learning based upon a literature review.

1.3.1 Traditional and Alternative Methods of Assessment

The features of traditional assessment methods are: They relate to a more summative assessment of learning which is terminal. It is the guide to identify the level of students' grasp of knowledge and selection of outstanding students. It is the quantitative evaluation on students that from teacher, education authorities to examination authorities… It only focuses on the students' final mastery of knowledge, unified contents, and unified evaluation criteria (National Research Council, 1996: 175).

The advantages of traditional assessment methods are: their ability to accurately assess students' levels within the specified range of knowledge, they accept all of the objects in accordance with the evaluation "of a part of the knowledge content mastery" from highest to lowest order (Arter & Busick, 2001). Precisely this advantage, for a long time, this kind of education assessment methods are widely used in teachers judge the success of student learning, school judge teachers' success, higher education authorities judge quality teaching, all levels of the school judge student strengths and weaknesses in admissions work (Stiggins, 2004).

The features of alternative assessment methods are: they occur on a diverse evaluation context, converted from a one-way to multi-directional. They can enhance interaction between the main evaluations. They can emphasize the evaluators to become the subject of an evaluation, and establish the evaluation system that students, teachers, parents, administrators and other joint participation

and interaction (Hogan, 1991). These methods include multi-channel feedback information to promote the development of the evaluators. They completed in the learning process dynamic evaluation. They focus on the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the combined evaluation of the use (Compion, 1983). Some new evaluation tools, such as electronic portfolio, gauges, concept maps, learning contract, examples, display, etc. are widely used in teaching evaluation.

They truly assess the potential of students, learning achievement. They truly focus on the learning process together with the evaluation process, to promote the development of students to provide comprehensive information (Blakley, Crawford & Jago, 1994). They facilitate operation in a real context for advanced learners thinking skills, the ability to reflect, ability to cooperate, information gathering capability, processing power and creative ability on assessment (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). They are conducive to mobilize students against their own characteristics, to seriously participate in the learning process of the initiative (Arter & Busick, 2001).

In the next section, I describe the most used assessment methods to assess student learning.

1.3.1.1 Written Tests/Exams

Witten tests/exams are tests that are administered on paper or on a computer. A test taker who takes a written test could respond to specific items by writing or typing within a given space of the test or on a separate form or document (Chan, & Schmitt).

In some tests, where knowledge of many constants or technical terms is required to effectively answer questions, like Chemistry or Biology - the test developer may allow every test taker to bring with them a cheat sheet (Weichmann, Schmitt, & Harvey, 2001).

A test developer's choice of which style or format to use when developing a written test is usually arbitrary given that there is no single invariant standard for testing (Asher & Sciarrino, 1974). Be that as it may, certain test styles and format have become more widely used than others. Below is a list of those formats of test items that are widely used by educators and test developers to construct paper or computer-based tests (Hunter, 1984). As a result, these tests may consist of only one type of test item format (e.g., multiple choice test, essay test) or may have a combination of different test item formats (e.g., a test that has multiple choice and essay items).

1.3.1.2 Standardized Exams

The advantages are:

(1) Convenient

(2) Can be adopted and implemented quickly.

(3) Reduce or eliminate faculty time demands in instrument development and grading.

(4) Are scored objectively.

(5) Provide for external validity.

(6) Provide reference group measures.

(7) Can make longitudinal comparisons

(8) Can test large numbers of students (Howard, A. 1983).

The disadvantages are:

(1) Measure relatively superficial knowledge or learning.

(2) Unlikely to match the specific goals and objectives of a program or institution.

(3) Norm-referenced data may be less useful than criterion-referenced.

(4) May be cost prohibitive to administer as a pre- and post-test.

(5) More summative than formative (may be difficult to isolate what changes are needed).

(6) Norm data may be user norms rather than true national sample.

(7) May be difficult to receive results in a timely manner (Thornton, G.C., 1992).

1.3.1.3 Portfolio

The types of portfolios are：

(1) Learning Portfolios.

(2) Assessment Portfolios.

(3) Marketing Portfolios.

(4) Job Portfolios.

(5) Showcase Portfolios.

(6) Performance Portfolios.

(7) Personal Portfolios.

(8) Proficiency/Competency Portfolios.

(9) Process Portfolios.

(10) Developmental Portfolios.

(11) Hybrid Portfolios.

The potential advantages of portfolios are:

(1) Show sophistication in student performance.

(2) Illustrate longitudinal trends.

(3) Highlight student strengths.

(4) Identify student weaknesses for remediation, if timed properly.

(5) Can be used to view learning and development longitudinally.

(6) Samples are more likely than test results to reflect student ability when planning, input from others, and similar opportunities common to more work settings are available.

(7) Process of reviewing and evaluating portfolios provide an excellent opportunity for faculty exchange and development, discussion of curriculum goals and objectives, review of criteria, and program feedback.

(8) May be economical in terms of student time and effort if no separate assessment administration time is required.

(9) Greater faculty control over interpretation and use of results.

(10) Results are more likely to be meaningful at all levels (student, class, program, institution) and can be used for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes as well.

(11) Avoid or minimize test anxiety and other one-shot measurement problems.

(12) Increase power of maximum performance measures over more artificial or restrictive speed measures on test or in-class sample.

(13) Increase student participation (selection, revision, and evaluation) in the assessment process.

(14) Could match well with Morningside's mission to cultivate lifelong learning

(15) Can be used to gather information about students' assignments and experiences.

(16) Reflective statements could be used to gather information about student satisfaction.

(17) Multiple components of the curriculum can be assessed (e.g. writing, critical thinking, technology skills). (Tochner & Schiemer, 1997)

The potential disadvantages are:

(1) Portfolios will be no better than the quality of the collected artifacts.

(2) Time consuming and challenging to evaluate.

(3) Space and ownership challenges make evaluation difficult.

(4) Content may vary widely among students.

(5) Students may fail to remember to collect items.

(6) Transfer students may not be in the position to provide complete portfolio.

(7) Time intensive to convert to meaningful data.

(8) Costly in terms of evaluator time and effort.

(9) Management of the collection and evaluation process, including the establishment of reliable and valid grading criteria, is likely to be challenging.

(10) May not provide for externality.

(11) If samples to be included have been previously submitted for course grades, faculty may be concerned that a hidden agenda of the process is to validate their grading.

(12) Security concerns may arise as to whether submitted samples are the students' own work or adhere to other measurement criteria.

(13) Must consider whether and how graduates will be allowed continued access to their portfolios.

(14) Inter-rater reliability must be addressed. (Rust, 2002)

1.3.1.4 Practical Work

Practical work is an essential part of science education, but to make it effective, we need to decide what we want students to learn from any particular lesson, and to consider the best approach for achieving that (Brannick & Levine, 2002).

By "practical work" we mean tasks in which students observe or manipulate real objects or materials - for themselves (individually or in small groups) or by witnessing teacher demonstrations (Gael, 1988).

Practical work can: (1) Motivate pupils, by stimulating interest and enjoyment. (2) Teach laboratory skills. (3) Enhance the learning of scientific knowledge. (4) Give insight into scientific method and develop expertise in using it. (5) Develop 'scientific attitudes', such as open-mindedness and objectivity. (Hodson, 1990).

1.3.1.5 Oral Presentations

The advantages are:

(1) Can be used to assess from multiple perspectives.

(2) Using a student-centered design can promote student motivation.

(3) Can be used to assess transfer of skills and integration of content.

(4) Engage student in active learning.

(5) Encourage time on academics outside of class.

(6) Can provide a dimension of depth not available in classroom

(7) Can promote student creativity.

(8) Can be scored holistically or analytically.

(9) May allow probes by faculty to gain clearer picture of student understanding or though processes.

(10) Can provide closing of feedback loop between students and faculty.

(11) Can place faculty more in a mentor role than as judge.

(12) Can be summative or formative.

(13) Can provide an avenue for student self-assessment and reflection.

(14) Can be embedded within courses.

(15) Can adapt current assignments.

(16) Usually the most valid way of assessing skill development. (Hall et al, 1994)

The disadvantages are:

(1) Usually the mostly costly approach.

(2) Time consuming and labor intensive to design and execute for faculty and students.

(3) Must be carefully designed if used to document obtainment of student learning outcomes.

(4) Ratings can be more subjective.

(5) Requires careful training of raters.

(6) Inter-rater reliability must be addressed.

(7) Production costs may be prohibitive for some students and hamper reliability.

(8) Sample of behavior or performance may not be typical, especially if observers are present. (Boon et al, 1996)

Oral presentations and observations are examples of performance assessment. Exhibitions of mastery and group projects can take the form of extended written response, performance assessment, or personal communication depending on how they are carried out (Campion & Palmer, 1997).

Birenbaum and Feldman (1998), Birenbaum (1997) and Tang et al. (1999) state that if students are assessed through methods that they prefer, they will be more motivated to give their best. Students, when assessed, for example, through portfolio or project, do an analysis of what they learn and how they can have better performance (Darling-Hammond 2008). However, it is important to note that the approach to learning is not always the same, since it is dynamic and constantly changing by the context and the tasks that student experience, even though, these changes are subtle and are not always noted (Struyven, Dochy and Janssens 2005). Existing literature also highlights that using inappropriate assessment procedures will encourage a surface approach to learning. Thus, different methods lead to and determine different approaches to learning (Scouller 1998). Sambell and McDowell (1998) concluded that for many students traditional assessment methods have a negative effect on the learning process, because a simple test does not require as much understanding as a more difficult task, in which students have to understand its meaning and its complexity. In contrast, students think that alternative methods improve the quality of learning, since they are challenged to lead their efforts to try to understand rather than simply memorize a document or material that is being studied.

As literature suggests, assessment methods are considered to be an important factor that influences the learning process in a negative or positive way (Boud, 1995; Struyven, Dochy and Janssens 2005). Therefore, conventional assessment follows a traditional line of assessment in different areas of expertise. There are significant

differences in different areas of knowledge and, as a result, assessment methods adopted should be different depending on the specific area (Boud, 1995).

The choice of given methods of assessment depends on each individual teacher and the context and institutional framework in which he/she works, but it is also dependent upon his/her beliefs about assessment, teaching and learning. The same is valid for students' perceptions of assessment a

Given the possibilities of methods of assessment methods, it is important to get to know how students look

In the next chapter, I present the main characteristics of the study I have carried out and I explain its main dimensions and procedures.

CHAPTER Ⅱ

Research Design

This chapter presents the design of my research. My research was the expansion and development of Diana Pereira's study in other different areas. So, I have adapted her questionnaire to collect data in Portugal and China. I also present my research goals and procedures as well as its main limitations.

2.1 Research Objectives

In my research, there are four objectives:

(1) Understand the perceptions of students about the assessment of Chinese learning.

(2) Identify the methods of assessment used by teachers in different courses from the perspective of students.

(3) Understand assessment practices in light of the experience of students.

(4) Identify perceptions of students about the assessment process and its relationship with Chinese learning.

The overarching goal is to make some useful suggestions and to make a contribution for the assessment of student learning of Chinese in higher education.

2.2 Nature of the Study

This study is exploratory in nature. It aims at gaining insights into a specific theme, in this case higher education students' perceptions of assessment of their learning in Chinese. According Blumer (1969, p. 40) in Corbin & Strauss (2008, p. 65), "The purpose of an exploratory study is to move toward a clearer understanding of how one ́s problem to be posed, to learn what are the appropriate data, to develop ideas of what are significant lines of relation and to evolve one ́s conceptual tools in the light of what one is learning area of life".

The study focuses upon the student learning of Chinese in higher education, which is a new research area. Prior to this study, there are few educational scholars who are concerned about this area. In this study, I used a lot of outstanding articles

and valuable research results from other educational areas internationally; I put some valuable research methods into my current research, in order to open up a new road in this field of student learning Chinese in higher education.

2.3. Method for Data Collection

In this research, I used a questionnaire for data collection (see appendix 1). . The questionnaire is used by Diana Pereira's and that I had permission from the author to use it in my research. The advantages of the questionnaire as a means of data collection are (Langdridge & Johnson, 2009):

(1) I can understand the students' basic attitude and behavior from the questionnaire, and any other way cannot be done like this approach.

(2) The results (data) of questionnaire are easy to quantify. The questionnaire is a structured investigation, the forms of expression, the order of questions, and the ways of answers are fixed, and it is a text communication, therefore, any individual, whether researchers or investigators are impossible to subjective bias into questionnaire research. The statistical results of questionnaire can be quantified out in general.

(3) The data from the questionnaire are easy to analysis and count.

(4) Using the questionnaire can save time, money and manpower.

The questionnaire is nameless, and it is divided into two blocks:

"Block I" focuses on students' basic information, consisting of gender, grade, age, the year they attend the course.

"Block II" includes questions related to assessment. There are five groups of questions and these questions are included for the purpose of the features associated with assessment, assessment methods, criteria for assessing learning, and modes of assessment and perceptions of fairness and effectiveness.

The first group of questions is related to features associated with assessment. There are 18 items about "Take into account your experience as a student, and

please identity what are the features that you associate the most with assessment?" For example, "conflict", "reflection", "anxiety", "learning", and so on. And the participants should use the scale: none, a little, some, and a lot to describe them.

The second group of questions is related to assessment methods. There are 17 items about "According to your experience as a student doing in Chinese learning course, what kind of assessment methods are most used by teachers in the course?" For example, "written tests", "oral tests", "portfolios in group" and "group reports", and so on. And the participants should use the scales never used, used a little, use some extent, and always used to describe them.

The third question is related to criteria for assessing learning. It is an open-ended question and the students should respond according to their experience, their thinking about the assessment criteria that are most valued by teachers.

The fourth and fifth parts of question are related to modes of assessment and perceptions of fairness and effectiveness. There are 31 items in the fourth group of questions, and the fourth group of question allows the participants to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements about assessment. For example, "I feel more confident when I am assessed though test or examination", "In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods" They should use the scale" Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree and Strongly Disagree" to describe them. The last question in the questionnaire is also an open-ended question. The participations should give their opinion about "what makes the assessment a fairer process and why?"

The questionnaire takes the form that combined the open-ended and close-ended questions. In this questionnaire, not only are there multiple-choice questions, but it also allow students to write their own thoughts. Data were collected in during the academic year 2012/2013.

2.4. Participants

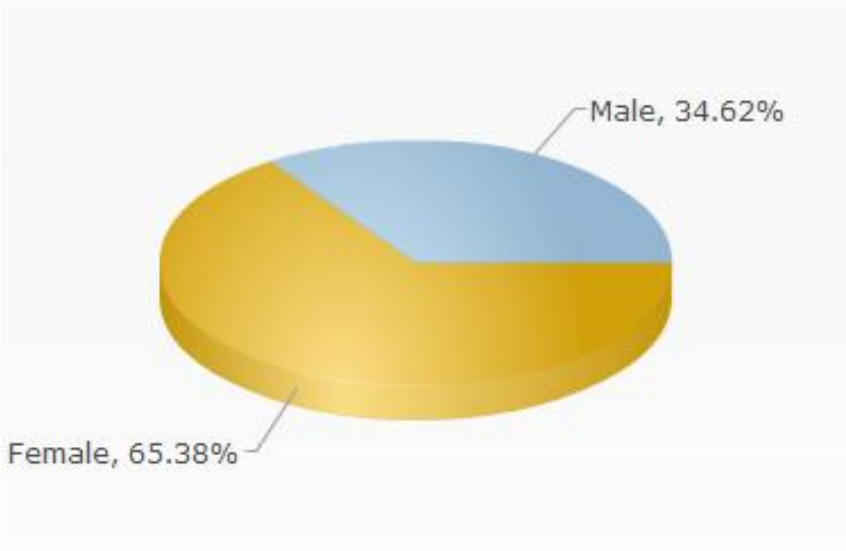
There are two kinds of participants in this research. One part is the students

learning Chinese in Portugal; the other part is the students learning Chinese in China.

2.4.1. Participants Learning Chinese in Portugal

All the participants that are were leaning Chinese in Portugal come from Minho University. Twenty-six students answered the questionnaire, including 9 males and 17 females. Males account 34.62% of the total numberand the females account 65.38%.

Figure 1- Gender of the participants (P)[1]



Their ages are from 18 years old to 32 years old, including 19 years old and 20 years old is the most.

[1] In this thesis, "P" represents "The students learning Chinese in Portugal.

Table 2- Age of respondents (P)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18	1	3.8%
19	7	26.9%
20	8	30.7%
21	4	15.4
22	1	3.8%
23	2	7.6%
26	1	3.8%
28	1	3.8%
32	1	3.8%

In this part, there are 9 students from Grade 1, and attended the course since 2011, account 34.6% of the total number. There are 16 students form Grade 2, and attended the course since 2010, account 61.5%. This shows the students that are undergraduates (Bachelor) 25 altogether, account 96.2%. In addition to this, there is 1 student from Grade 2 (master degree, actually she has graduated), she attended the course since 2008, account 3.8%.

Table 3 - Course of respondents (P)

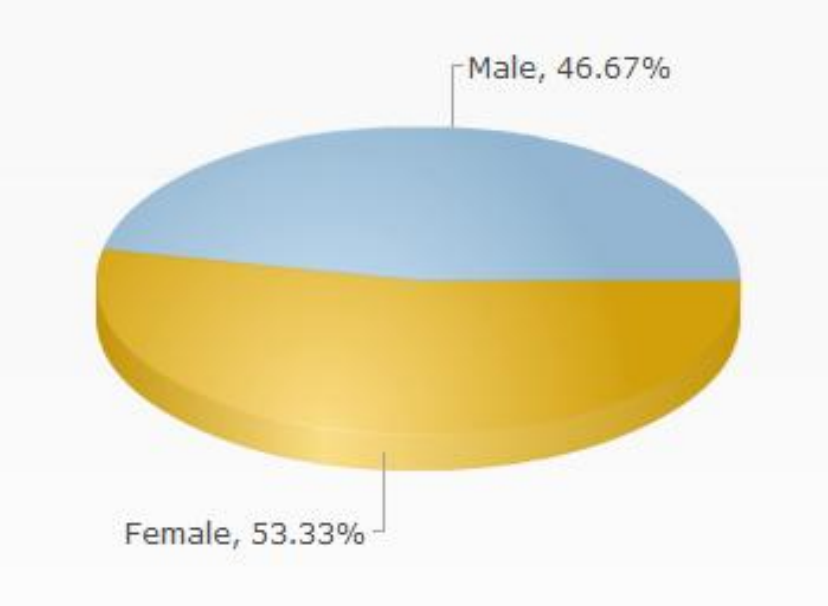
Grade		The year attend the course		Course	
1	9 (34.6%)	2011	9 (34.6%)	Undergraduate (Bachelor):	25 (96.2%)
2	16 (61.5%)	2010	16 (61.5%)		
2 (master)	1 (3.8%)	2008	1 (3.8%)	Graduate (Master):	1 (3.8%)

2.4.2 Participants Learning Chinese in China

All the participations that were learning Chinese in China come from Nankai University. There were thirty students answered the questionnaire. All the students are foreign students. They come from different countries and regions but all can read in English.

These students include 14 males and 16 females. The males account 46.67% of the total number and the females account 53.33%.

Figure 2- Gender of participants (C)[2]



Their ages are from 20 years old to 26 years old. It has a more equitable distribution of the age from 21 years old to 25 years old. There is no one less than 20 years old and more than 30 years old. The majority of their ages is form 21 years old to 24 years old.

[2] In this thesis, "C" represents "The students learning Chinese in China."

Table 4- Age of respondents (C)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20	2	6.7%
21	6	20%
22	6	20%
23	5	16.7%
24	6	20%
25	4	13.3%
26	1	3.3%

The Chinese participants were 12 students from Grade 1, and attended the course since 2011, account 40% of the total number. There were 18 students form Grade 2, and attended the course since 2010, account 60%. This shows all of the students that are undergraduates (Bachelor), there are 30 altogether, and they account 100%.

Table 5 - Course of respondents (C)

Grade		**The year attend the course**		**course**	
1	12 (40%)	2011	12 (40%)	Undergraduate (Bachelor):	30 (100%)
2	18 (60%)	2010	18 (60%)		

2.4.3 Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Firstly, I did the questionnaire to the students in Minho University. I went to this classroom after they finished class, personally guided them to fill out the

questionnaire, if they have some questions about the questionnaire.

Secondly, I went back to China to finish another part of the research——to gather data from the students who are learning Chinese in Nankai University. I send the questionnaire by the internet (email or the university board), and personally guided them to fill out the questionnaire, if they have some questions about the questionnaire.

Finally, after I collected their answers, I analyzed the data. When I retrieved all the questionnaires, I gave the serial number to each questionnaire (form P1 to P26, and from C1 to C30). Then according to the order of the questions, I input all the answers from each questionnaire, and make the tables for these answers. Finally, I used the software of data analysis (I used the software named "Surveycraft" this time) to count the sum and percentage, and draw the different tables at last.

In the next chapter I present the main findings according four categories of analysis: features associated with assessment, assessment methods, criteria for assessing learning and modes of assessment and perceptions of fairness and effectiveness. The data is obtained based on the students from two different universities, and in appropriate cases, I make a comprehensive analysis for the students from two different universities who are learning Chinese.

2.5 Limitations of My Study

It is so regret that there are some limitations in this research, this is because there are some objective factors and difficulties, and I was unable to overcome them.

(1) The quantity of the participants is rather limited.

Because there are few in number students learning Chinese in Portugal, especially learning Chinese in higher education, I can't find more students complete my questionnaire. As shown in the results, there are only 26 Portuguese students willing to complete my questionnaire.

When I was in China do this questionnaire research, the students of Nankai University were preparing for their mid-term exam. So I just can find 30 students to complete my questionnaire.

(2) The lack of research literature on assessment learning Chinese (due to its specific nature)

Although this research is the expansion of the thesis by Diana Pereira (2011), the perspective and field of the research is different. And although I can read a lot of literature articles about assessment in Higher Education, but assessment of learning Chinese is a new research perspective and research field. So there are not enough relational and useful literature.

(3) The obstacle in the language.

When I was in Portugal to do the questionnaire research, I gave Portuguese students two identical questionnaires, one is in Portuguese, and the other one is in English. Students need to understand the questions on the questionnaire in Portuguese, and then used English to answer the questions on the questionnaire in English. The Portuguese students were not using their first language to answer questions and this may have influenced data collection.

When I was in China to do the questionnaire research, Nankai University students come from different countries (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and so on), they have different first languages, so I just can give them a questionnaire in English, and they must read the questionnaire in English, and then answer the questions in English. For the students from non-English speaking countries, it may be limited to them to answer questions because of their English level.

CHAPTER III

Findings

In this chapter students' perceptions of assessment of Learning Chinese in Portugal and in China are presented using tables and descriptions. According to the questionnaire, I present my findings in four aspects: features associated with assessment, assessment methods, criteria for assessing learning and modes of assessment and perceptions of fairness and effectiveness. In every aspect, firstly, I introduce the findings of the students who learning Chinese in Portugal. Secondly, I introduce the findings of the students who learning Chinese in China. At last, I compare and contrast them, and talk some issues about the differences and similarities.

3.1 Features Associated with Assessment

In the questionnaire, block II, the first group of questions are "Take into account your experience as a student, and please identity what are the features that you associate the most with assessment?" And participants should use the scale: none, a little, some, and many to describe them. The purpose of this group of questions is to get to know the features associated with assessment in the students' opinions.

3.1.1 The Students Learning Chinese in Portugal

Firstly, let's look at the data of the questionnaire from the students learning Chinese in Portugal. From the data we can see the choices that more than 50%, made: (a lot) grades/marks (53.85%), (some) reflection (53.85%), and (some) verification of knowledge (53.85%), (some) certification (50%), and (a lot) learning (61.54%). (see Table 2). There are some options that nobody chooses (0%).

Table 6- The Data of the Answers from Question 1(P)

	None	A little	Some	A lot
1 grades/marks	0(0%)	5(19.23%)	7(26.92%)	14(53.85%)
2 power	6(23.08%)	6(23.08%)	6(23.08%)	8(30.77%)
3 conflict	9(34.62%)	12(46.15%)	4(15.38%)	1(3.85%)
4 reflection	1(3.85%)	10(38.46%)	14(53.85%)	1(3.85%)
5 dissimilarity/ injustice	8(30.77%)	13(50%)	2(7.69%)	3(11.54%)
6 success	0(0%)	3(11.54%)	13(50%)	10(38.46%)
7 participation	1(3.85%)	5(19.23%)	9(34.62%)	11(42.31%)
8 inequality	8(30.77%)	9(34.62%)	6(23.08%)	3(11.54%)
9 fear	12(46.15%)	9(34.62%)	4(15.38%)	1(3.85%)
10 verification of knowledge	1(3.85%)	3(11.54%)	14(53.85%)	8(30.77%)
11 support	1(3.85%)	5(19.23%)	15(57.69%)	5(19.23%)
1.12 mediation	3(11.54%)	10(38.46%)	13(50%)	0(0%)
13 anxiety	8(30.77%)	8(30.77%)	10(38.46%)	0(0%)
14 control	3(11.54%)	8(30.77%)	12(46.15%)	3(11.54%)
15 tests/exams	1(3.85%)	1(3.85%)	8(30.77%)	16(61.54%)
16 certification	1(3.85%)	7(26.92%)	13(50%)	5(19.23%)
17 imposition	9(34.62%)	7(26.92%)	7(26.92%)	3(11.54%)
18 learning	0(0%)	0(0%)	10(38.46%)	16(61.54%)

3.1.2 The Students Leaning Chinese in China

Table 3 presents the ideas that Chinese students associate with assessment. From the data we can see that the choices with more than 50% are: (some) participation (63.33%), (some) support (66.67%), (some) control (56.67%), (a lot) tests/exams (60%) and (a lot) learning (63.33%). And in the column "none", there are many options nobody (0%) choose them: grades/marks, power, participation, verification of knowledge, support, mediation, tests/exams, certification, imposition and learning.

Table 7- The Data of the Answers from Question 1(C)

	None	A little	Some	A lot
1 grades/marks	0(0%)	6(20%)	13(43.33%)	11(36.67%)
2 power	0(0%)	10(33.33%)	14(46.67%)	6(20%)
3 conflict	2(6.67%)	12(40%)	12(40%)	4(13.33%)
4 reflection	2(6.67%)	6(20%)	13(43.33%)	9(30%)
5 dissimilarity/ injustice	6(20%)	13(43.33%)	9(30%)	2(6.67%)
6 success	1(3.33%)	7(23.33%)	15(50%)	7(23.33%)
7 participation	0(0%)	2(6.67%)	19(63.33%)	9(30%)
8 inequality	4(13.33%)	14(46.67%)	9(30%)	3(10%)
9 fear	3(10%)	20(66.67%)	7(23.33%)	0(0%)
10 verification of knowledge	0(0%)	2(6.67%)	14(46.67%)	14(46.67%)

	None	A little	Some	A lot
11 support	0(0%)	2(6.67%)	20(66.67%)	8(26.67%)
12 mediation	0(0%)	9(30%)	12(40%)	9(30%)
13 anxiety	3(10%)	14(46.67%)	11(36.67%)	2(6.67%)
14 control	2(6.67%)	10(33.33%)	17(56.67%)	1(3.33%)
15 tests/exams	0(0%)	4(13.33%)	8(26.67%)	18(60%)
16 certification	0(0%)	6(20%)	12(40%)	12(40%)
17 imposition	0(0%)	6(20%)	18(60%)	6(20%)
18 learning	0(0%)	3(10%)	8(26.67%)	19(63.33%)

3.1.3 Compare and Contrast

Firstly, we can see there are some differences in the options “fear”, “mediation” and “imposition”, two of which do not have positive influence on assessment. In table 4, “P” stands for “the students who are learning Chinese in Portugal”. “C” stands for “the students who are learning Chinese in China”.

In general, in the understanding of "assessment", the students learning Chinese in Portugal feel the level of "fear" ,”mediation” and “imposition” less than the students learning Chinese in China. The reason may be related to the environment and backgrounds of higher education in Portugal. In Portugal, the pressure of learning Chinese is less than in China, the pressure tends to give students the fear feeling. It can make the assessment process like the process of mediation. The pressure also can give students some feeling they are imposition.

Table 8– Data Comparison for Question 1(1)

	None		**A little**		**Some**		**A lot**	
	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C
fear	46.15%	10%	34.62%	66.67%	15.38%	23.33%	3.85%	0%
mediation	11.54%	0%	38.46%	30%	50%	40%	0%	30%
imposition	34.62%	0%	26.92%	20%	26.92%	60%	11.54%	20%

From the data of the students learning Chinese in China, I find that "none" has few chances to be selected. I think the reason is that in China, there are more assessment methods to be used, and more assessment methods can give the students more kinds of feelings (see Table 5).

Table 9– Data Comparison for Question 1(2)

	None (the options nobody choose 0%)
P	grades/marks, success, learning
C	grades/marks, power, verification of knowledge, support, mediation, tests/exams, certification, imposition, learning

3.2 Assessment Methods

In the questionnaire, the next part of questions is "According to your experience as a student doing in Chinese learning course, what kind of assessment methods are most used by teachers in the course?" And the participations should use the scales never used (N), used a little (L), use some extent (E), and always

used (A) to describe them.

3.2.1 The Students Learning Chinese in Portugal

Table 6 presents data from the questionnaire from the students learning Chinese in Portugal. According to these data, we can see there are some options very prominent. The most used assessment methods are: written tests/exams (84.62%) used a little Group written work（73.08%，never used Individual portfolios (76.92%), never used Group reports (69.23%), never used Individual reports (57.69%).

Table 10- The Data of the Answers from Question 2 (P)

	Never	**A little**	**To some extent**	**Always**
1.Written Tests/Exams	0(0%)	1(3.85%)	3(11.54%)	22(84.62%)
2.Oral Tests	0(0%)	1(3.85%)	9(34.62%)	16(61.54%)
3.Individual written work	4(15.38%)	6(23.08%)	12(46.15%)	4(15.38%)
4.Group written work	5(19.23%)	19(73.08%)	2(7.69%)	0(0%)
5.Individual portfolios	22(84.62%)	3(11.54%)	1(3.85%)	0(0%)
6.Portfolios in group	20(76.92%)	6(23.08%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
7.Resolution of practical work / individual experiments	9(34.62%)	10(38.46%)	5(19.23%)	2(7.69%)
8.Resolution of practical work / group experiments	8(30.77%)	12(46.15%)	4(15.38%)	2(7.69%)

	Never	**A little**	**To some extent**	**Always**
9.Individual project work	12(46.15%)	10(38.46%)	3(11.54%)	1(3.85%)
10.Group project work	12(46.15%)	11(42.31%)	3(11.54%)	0(0%)
11. Individual reports	15(57.69%)	4(15.38%)	4(15.38%)	3(11.54%)
12. Group reports	18(69.23%)	4(15.38%)	4(15.38%)	0(0%)
13.Individual written reflections	11(42.31%)	9(34.62%)	3(11.54%)	3(11.54%)
14.Critical reviews of individual texts	12(46.15%)	9(34.62%)	5(19.23%)	0(0%)
15.Critical reviews of group texts	13(50%)	7(26.92%)	6(23.08%)	0(0%)
16.Oral presentations in group	6(23.08%)	12(46.15%)	6(23.08%)	2(7.69%)
17.Individual oral presentations	2(7.69%)	7(26.92%)	8(30.77%)	9(34.62%)

3.2.2 The Students Learning Chinese in China

Table 7 presents data from students learning Chinese in China. According to these data, we can see there are some options very prominent. They are always used written tests/exams (100%), always used oral tests (96.67%), always used individual written work (86.67%), used a little group written work (66.67%), used a little group project work (66.67%), and used to some extent individual oral presentations (60%).

Table 11- The Data of the Answers from Question 2 (C)

	Never	**A little**	**To some extent**	**Always**
1.Written Tests/Exams	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	30(100%)
2.Oral Tests	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(3.33%)	29(96.67%)
3.Individual written work	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(13.33%)	26(86.67%)
4.Group written work	0(0%)	20(66.67%)	10(33.33%)	0(0%)
5.Individual portfolios	0(0%)	10(33.33%)	19(63.33%)	1(3.33%)
6.Portfolios in group	0(0%)	16(53.33%)	9(30%)	5(16.67%)
7.Resolution of practical work / individual experiments	0(0%)	8(26.67%)	19(63.33%)	3(10%)
8.Resolution of practical work / group experiments	0(0%)	16(53.33%)	12(40%)	2(6.67%)
9.Individual project work	0(0%)	6(20%)	15(50%)	9(30%)
10.Group project work	0(0%)	20(66.67%)	9(30%)	1(3.33%)
11.Individual reports	0(0%)	7(23.33%)	19(63.33%)	4(13.33%)
12.Group reports	0(0%)	17(56.67%)	12(40%)	1(3.33%)
13.Individual written reflections	0(0%)	3(10%)	22(73.33%)	5(16.67%)
14.Critical reviews of individual texts	0(0%)	5(16.67%)	19(63.33%)	6(20%)
15.Critical reviews of group texts	0(0%)	16(53.33%)	8(26.67%)	6(20%)

	Never	A little	To some extent	Always
16.Oral presentations in group	0(0%)	17(56.67%)	12(40%)	1(3.33%)
17.Individual oral presentations	0(0%)	10(33.33%)	18(60%)	2(6.67%)

3.3.3 Compare and Contrast

Compare the data of this part between the students who are learning Chinese in Portugal and the students who are learning Chinese in China，we can find the biggest difference is the column "never used". The students in China nobody choose “never used”. These data can be explained as assessment of Chinese learning in higher education in China use many assessment methods. At least, they used the assessment methods more than the students in Portugal.

3.3 Criteria for Assessing Learning

The third question is an open-ended question. It asks the participants their opinion, according to their experience, about assessment criteria that are most valued by teachers? This question can investigate what are good criteria for assessing learning in students’ opinions.

3.3.1 The Students Learning Chinese in Portugal

I compiled all the answers from the students learning Chinese in Portugal, and then found that all the answers can be divided into three categories. The first category is “exam/test”. There are 19 students (73.1%) who gave me this answer. In the nineteen students, there are 10 students (38.5%) who mentioned “oral exam/oral

test" and 12 students (46.15%) who mentioned "written exam/written test. The second category is "class performance". There are 9 students (34.6%) who gave me this answer in which six students (23.1%) mentioned "the participation during the class". The third category is "homework", but there are only 5 students (19.2%) who indicated this answer.

Table 12- The Data of the Answers from Question 3 (P)

Answer	**Frequency (Percentage)**
Exam/Test	19 (73.1%)
Oral Exam/Oral Test	10 (38.5%)
Written Exam/ Written Test	12 (46.15%)
Class Performance	9 (34.6%)
Participation	6 (23.1%)
Homework	5 (19.2%)

3.3.2 The Students Learning Chinese in China

I compiled all the answers from the students learning Chinese in China, and then found out that all the answers also can be divided into three categories. The first category is "exam/test". There are 28 students (93.33%) who gave me this answer. In the 28 students, there are 7 students (23.33%) who mentioned "oral exam/oral test" and 25 students (83.33%) who mentioned "written exam/written test. The second category is "class performance". There are only 2 students (6.67%) who gave me this answer. The third category is "homework", but there only 4 students (13.33%) gave me this answer. It can be seen that learning Chinese in higher education in China, the test/exam is the main method in assessment.

Table 13- The Data of the Answers from Question 3 (C)

Answer	Frequency (Percentage)
Exam/Test Oral Exam/Oral Test Written Exam/ Written Test	28 (93.33%) 7 (23.33%) 25 (83.33%)
Class Performance	2 (6.67%)
Homework	4 (13.33%)

3.3.3 Compare and Contrast

Unexpectedly, both students in Portugal and in China, in their opinions, the assessment criteria most valued by teachers are related to "exam/test". It seems that the status of exam/test is unshakable.

The only difference is the views of class performance. The students in Portugal pay more attention to the class performance. That is because there are some differences in their own education assessment systems.

In the end of the semester's final assessment, the final result of the students in Portugal, class performance usually has a relatively large proportion. So the participation for them is very important and valuable. The class performance is also very important for the students in China for their final results. But the class performance is quiz (80%) + attendance (20%). So in their options, the class performance is not very valuable.

3.4 Modes of Assessment and Perceptions of Fairness and Effectiveness

In the questionnaire, the fourth and the fifth group of questions focus on purpose of investigating that what modes of assessment and perceptions of fairness and effectiveness the students can give more agreement.

3.4.1 The Students Learning Chinese in Portugal

Firstly, the fourth part of questions allowed the participants to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements about assessment. They should use the scale" Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)" to describe them.

Let's see the data from the students learning Chinese in Portugal. For the views of the statements about assessment, the participants gave me very different choices.

There are several options to get more than half of a students' answers: 14 (53.85%) of the students strongly agree that "In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher"; 13(50%) students strongly agree "In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods". 14(53.85%), the students also agree that "When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a lot of practical exercises".

I can see from the overall statistics data as following, more students choose "Strongly Agree", "Agree", and "Uncertain", fewer student choose "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". In regard to the statement "In general, only there is assessment in the beginning of the semester", there are 13(50%) students who strongly disagree with it.

Table 14- The Data of the Answers from Question 4 (P)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1. The assessment is fairer when there is self-assessment.	5 (19.23%)	5 (19.23%)	11 (42.31%)	3 (11.54%)	2 (7.69%)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
2. The assessment is fairer when there is peer-assessment.	2 (7.69%)	8 (30.77%)	8 (30.77%)	3 (11.54%)	5 (19.23%)
3. The assessment is fairer when there is both self and peer assessment.	5 (19.23%)	6 (23.08%)	9 (34.62%)	2 (7.69%)	4 (15.38%)
4. In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher.	14 (53.85%)	10 (38.46%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.85%)
5. In general, the assessment methodology is negotiated or discussed with students.	1 (3.85%)	5 (19.23%)	5 (19.23%)	8 (30.77%)	7 (26.92%)
6. In general, I am asked to perform a self-assessment.	3 (11.54%)	1 (3.85%)	3 (11.54%)	6 (23.08%)	13 (50%)
7. In general, I usually participate in the assessment of my colleagues (peer-assessment).	1 (3.85%)	4 (15.38%)	7 (26.92%)	4 (15.38%)	10 (38.46%)
8. In general, the assessment is carried out at predetermined times throughout the period.	4 (15.38%)	6 (23.08%)	3 (11.54%)	8 (30.77%)	5 (19.23%)
9 In general, only there is assessment in the beginning of the semester.	2 (7.69%)	0 (0%)	5 (19.23%)	6 (23.08%)	13 (50%)
10. In general, only there is assessment at the end of semester.	4 (15.38%)	8 (30.77%)	5 (19.23%)	6 (23.08%)	3 (11.54%)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
11. In general, the assessment is carried out during the semester.	12 (46.15%)	9 (34.62%)	3 (11.54%)	1 (3.85%)	1 (3.85%)
12. In general, the assessment is carried out whenever I perform a task or activity.	7 (26.92%)	11 (42.31%)	3 (11.54%)	5 (19.23%)	0 (0%)
13. Assessment is fairer when allow me to apply knowledge in real contexts.	12 (46.15%)	9(34.62%)	2 (7.69%)	1 (3.85%)	2 (7.69%)
14. Assessment is fairer when allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific).	9 (34.62%)	7 (26.92%)	7 (26.92%)	0 (0%)	3 (11.54%)
15. Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.).	9 (34.62%)	7 (26.92%)	6 (23.08%)	1 (3.85%)	3 (11.54%)
16. Traditional assessment methods (tests or examinations) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	2 (7.69%)	8 (30.77%)	11 (42.31%)	3 (11.54%)	2 (7.69%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. Alternative assessment methods (portfolio, project) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	2 (7.69%)	10 (38.46%)	8 (30.77%)	5 (19.23%)	1 (3.85%)
18. Alternative assessment methods (e.g., portfolio, practical work) allow the development of my critical thinking.	6 (23.08%)	12 (46.15%)	7 (26.92%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)
19. In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods.	13 (50%)	9 (34.62%)	3 (11.54%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)
20. Teachers should use at least one assessment method for a fairer assessment.	6 (23.08%)	7 (26.92%)	8 (30.77%)	3 (11.54%)	2 (7.69%)
21. I devote more hours to the study when assessment is done through a project or portfolio.	7 (26.92%)	7 (26.92%)	6 (23.08%)	5 (19.23%)	1 (3.85%)
22. Dedicate more hours to study when I do a practical work or project or a portfolio.	6 (23.08%)	11 (42.31%)	3 (11.54%)	6 (23.08%)	0 (0%)
23. I feel more confident when I am assessed though test or examination.	2 (7.69%)	10 (38.46%)	4 (15.38%)	7 (26.92%)	3 (11.54%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24. I feel more confident when I am assessed through the methods where I participate actively in the tasks.	7 (26.92%)	10 (38.46%)	8 (30.77%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)
25. The assessment stimulates my learning.	10 (38.46%)	7 (26.92%)	8 (30.77%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)
26. I only study the syllabus than integrate the tests.	3 (11.54%)	9 (34.62%)	10 (38.46%)	4 (15.38%)	0 (0%)
27. I prefer to be assessed individually.	9 (34.62%)	11 (42.31%)	5 (19.23%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)
28. I prefer to be assessed in a group.	2 (7.69%)	5 (19.23%)	6 (23.08%)	5 (19.23%)	8 (30.77%)
29. The assessment is fair when it contributes to the deepening approaches of (my) learning.	8 (30.77%)	12 (46.15%)	5 (19.23%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.85%)
30. When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a lot of practical exercises.	6 (23.08%)	14 (53.85%)	3 (11.54%)	2 (7.69%)	1 (3.85%)
31. Usually, I forget most of the content studied shortly after taking the exam.	3 (11.54%)	6 (23.08%)	7 (26.92%)	9 (34.62%)	1 (3.85%)

Secondly, the last question in the questionnaire is also an open-ended question. The participants should give their opinion about “what makes the assessment a

fairer process and why?”

I want to show the answers from the students learning Chinese in Portugal. Out of 26 students, there are 18 students who gave me the answer. I can put these answers into two categories. The first category is that the process of assessment is fairer when test and exam are used, if only the test or exam has common standards, the assessment can be fairer. There are 5 (19.23%) students who agree this answer. The other category is that a fairer assessment should be systematic and continuous. Assessment should be systematic and cover all aspects of language (written， spoken， heard，read). It should also be applied in actual practice in accordance with the students' proficiency and difficulties. There should be different methods of assessment: written exams， oral exams， individual and group works (practical or not). The evaluation should be continues and take in to accordant all of the dimensions of assessment. The evaluations should take into account not only the scores but the commitment and dedication of the student. There are 13 (50%) students who agree this kind of answer.

Table 15- The Data of the Answers from Question 5 (P)

Answer	**Frequency (Percentage)**
A fairer assessment should include test and exam.	5 (19.23%)
A fairer assessment should be systematic and continuous.	13 (50%)

3.4.2 The Students Learning Chinese in China

Firstly, let’s have a look at the data from the students learning Chinese in China. There are several options to get more than half of a students' responses: 16 (53.33%) students strongly agree with “Assessment is fairer when it allows me to

apply knowledge in real contexts". 15 (50%) students are uncertain about "I only study the syllabus than integrate the tests"; 22 (73.33%) students agree with the statement "The assessment is fair when it contributes to the deepening approaches of (my) learning". And 16 (53.33%) students agree with the item "When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a lot of practical exercises."

I can see from the overall statistics data, more students choose "Strongly Agree", "Agree", and "Uncertain", fewer student choose "Disagree" , and Nobody (0%) choose "Strongly Disagree".

Table 16- The Data of the Answers from Question 4 (C)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1. The assessment is fairer when there is self-assessment.	10 (33.33%)	10 (33.33%)	8 (26.67%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
2. The assessment is fairer when there is peer-assessment.	6 (20%)	16 (53.33%)	6 (20%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
3. The assessment is fairer when there is both self and peer assessment.	6 (20%)	14 (46.67%)	9 (30%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
4. In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher.	11 (36.67%)	8 (26.67%)	8 (26.67%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
5. In general, the assessment methodology is negotiated or discussed with students.	2 (6.67%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
6. In general, I am asked to perform a self-assessment.	5 (16.67%)	10 (33.33%)	14 (46.67%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
7. In general, I usually participate in the assessment of my colleagues (peer-assessment).	8 (26.67%)	6 (20%)	11 (36.67%)	5 (16.67%)	0 (0%)
8. In general, the assessment is carried out at predetermined times throughout the period.	5 (16.67%)	13 (43.33%)	7 (23.33%)	5 (16.67%)	0 (0%)
9 In general, only there is assessment in the beginning of the semester.	3 (10%)	11 (36.67%)	14 (46.67%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
10. In general, only there is assessment at the end of semester.	4 (13.33%)	8 (26.67%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
11. In general, the assessment is carried out during the semester.	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	13 (43.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
12. In general, the assessment is carried out whenever I perform a task or activity.	3 (10%)	13 (43.33%)	13 (43.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
13. Assessment is fairer when allow me to apply knowledge in real contexts.	16 (53.33%)	9 (30%)	4 (13.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
14. Assessment is fairer when allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific).	5 (16.67%)	13 (43.33%)	11 (36.67%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
15. Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.).	8 (26.67%)	10 (33.33%)	10 (33.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
16. Traditional assessment methods (tests or examinations) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	7 (23.33%)	9 (30%)	13 (43.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
17. Alternative assessment methods (portfolio, project) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	4 (13.33%)	11 (36.67%)	13 (43.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
18. Alternative assessment methods (e.g., portfolio, practical work) allow the development of my critical thinking.	4 (13.33%)	17 (56.67%)	9 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
19. In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods.	11 (36.67%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
20. Teachers should use at least one assessment method for a fairer assessment.	5 (16.67%)	14 (46.67%)	10 (33.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
21. I devote more hours to the study when assessment is done through a project or portfolio.	8 (26.67%)	14 (46.67%)	7 (23.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
22. Dedicate more hours to study when I do a practical work or project or a portfolio.	8 (26.67%)	9 (30%)	10 (33.33%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
23. I feel more confident when I am assessed though test or examination .	9 (30%)	11 (36.67%)	8 (26.67%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
24. I feel more confident when I am assessed through the methods where I participate actively in the tasks.	10 (33.33%)	10 (33.33%)	8 (26.67%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
25. The assessment stimulates my learning.	6 (20%)	11 (36.67%)	12 (40%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
26. I only study the syllabus than integrate the tests.	7 (23.33%)	8 (26.67%)	15 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
27. I prefer to be assessed individually.	5 (16.67%)	10 (33.33%)	13 (43.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
28. I prefer to be assessed in a group.	8 (26.67%)	9 (30%)	11 (36.67%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
29. The assessment is fair when it contributes to the deepening approaches of (my) learning.	4 (13.33%)	22 (73.33%)	4 (13.33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a lot of practical exercises.	2 (6.67%)	16 (53.33%)	12 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
31. Usually, I forget most of the content studied shortly after taking the exam.	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	14 (46.67%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)

Secondly, let's see the data of the last question. I want to show the answers from the students learning Chinese in China. All of the 30 students answer this question. I can put these answers into three categories. The first category is "a fairer assessment should have fair assessment environment and the same standards". Everyone comply with the rules of the assessments. There are 13 (43.33%) students who gave me answers like this. The second category is "a fairer assessment should use more test methods". For example, a fairer assessment should combine normal scores during the class and final examination, and it can use homework, individual and group works to assess student learning. There are 10 (33.33%) students who wrote answers like this. The third category is "a fairer assessment should require teachers to keep fair and have a fair heart". Teachers should use the principle of fairness and have the responsibility to each student. There are 7 (23.33%) students who wrote answers like this.

Table 17- The Data of the Answers from Question 5 (C)

Answer	**Frequency (Percentage)**
A fairer assessment should have fair assessment environment and the same standards.	13(43.33%)
A fairer assessment should use more than test methods.	10 (33.33%)
A fairer assessment should require teachers to keep fair procedures and have a fair heart.	7 (23.33%)

3.4.3 Compare and Contrast

Firstly, I should compare and contrast the data of fourth group of questions. The first three statements are in order to discuss the effect of the "self-assessment" and "peer-assessment" in the assessment process. I want to know which kind of method can make the assessment become fairer. Before I analyze the questionnaires collected, I guess the students perhaps praise "self-assessment" and "peer-assessment" may be they like both of them, but the results startled me:

(1) From the data of the students in Portugal, we can find that not most of the students think "self-assessment", "peer-assessment" and "both self and peer assessment" can make the assessment become fairer. The option "uncertain" account for a large proportion.

(2) From the data of the students in China, most of the students think the assessment is fairer when there is self-assessment, peer-assessment and both self and peer assessment. Most of students choose the option "strongly agree" and "agree", among the three assessment modes, "peer-assessment" account for a large proportion. I think maybe it is because that there is lack of peer-assessment in the Chinese educational system.

Table 18– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 1-3)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
1. The assessment is fairer when there is self-assessment.	19.23 %	33.33 %	19.23 %	33.33 %	42.31 %	26.67 %	11.54 %	6.67 %	7.69 %	0 %
2. The assessment is fairer when there is peer-assessment.	27.69 %	20 %	30.77 %	53.33 %	30.77 %	20 %	11.54 %	6.67 %	19.23 %	0 %
3. The assessment is fairer when there is both self and peer assessment.	19.23 %	20 %	23.08 %	46.67 %	34.62 %	30 %	7.69 %	3.33 %	15.38 %	0 %

The fourth and fifth statement discussed which way is the assessment methodology decided: by the teacher or negotiated and discussed with the students.

(1) From the data of the students in Portugal, 92.31% students (53.85% + 38.46%) choose “strongly agree” or ”agree” for the statement “In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher”. It means that Chinese learning in higher education in Portugal, the assessment methodology is nearly all decided by the teacher.

(2) The data of the students in China are different. The percentage is average between the two statements. It means that Chinese learning in higher education in China, “the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher” and “the assessment methodology is negotiated or discussed with students”, both situations can be occurred in general.

Table 19– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 4-5)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
4. In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher.	53.85 %	20 %	38.46%	46.67 %	3.85 %	30 %	0 %	3.33 %	3.85 %	0 %
5. In general, the assessment methodology is negotiated or discussed with students.	3.85 %	36.67 %	19.23%	26.67 %	19.23 %	26.67 %	30.77 %	10 %	26.92 %	0 %

The sixth and seventh statement investigated which mode is used more usually in China by the students: “self-assessment” or “the peer-assessment.

(1) The number of students that choose “strongly disagree” and “disagree” of the Portuguese students is more than Chinese.

(2) From the data of the students in Portugal, I can see that there are 84.62% students (11.54% + 23.08% +50%) choose “uncertain”, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” for the statement “In general, I am asked to perform a self-assessment”. There are 80.76% students (26.92% + 15.38% + 16.67%) who choose “uncertain”, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” for the statement “In general, I usually participate in the assessment of my colleagues (peer-assessment)”. It means that the students in Portugal not often use the two assessment modes. It also indicates the view I mentioned earlier: in Chinese learning in higher education in Portugal, the assessment methodology is nearly all decided by the teacher.

(3) The students in China choose more “uncertain” than their Portuguese counterparts, the reason perhaps is they use more assessment methods, and they hard to tell me what method they used.

Table 20– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 6-7)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
6. In general, I am asked to perform a self-assessment.	11.54 %	16.67 %	3.85 %	33.33 %	11.54 %	46.67 %	23.08 %	3.33 %	50 %	0 %
7. In general, I usually participate in the assessment of my colleagues (peer-assessment).	3.85 %	26.67 %	15.38 %	20 %	26.92 %	36.67 %	15.38 %	16.67 %	38.46 %	0 %

The eighth to twelfth statements deal with the period in which the assessment happened. According to the data, I can find:

(1) From the data of the eighth statement “In general, the assessment is carried out at predetermined times throughout the semester”, I can see that the assessment of Portuguese students is not often carried out at predetermined times throughout the semester in general, because there are 50% (30.77% +19.23%) students who choose “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement.

The assessment of Chinese students always carried out at predetermined times throughout the period in general, because there are 60 (16.67% + 43.33%) students who choose “strongly agree” or “agree” for this statement.

(2) From the data of the ninth statement “In general, there is only assessment in the beginning of the semester”, I can know that the assessment of Portuguese students is not often only carried out in the beginning of the semester in general, because there are 73.08% (50% +23.08%) students who choose “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. There are 46.67% students of learning Chinese in China who choose “uncertain” for this statement.

(3) From the data of the tenth statement “In general, there is only assessment in the beginning of the semester”, I can see that number is similar between the

Portuguese students choosing “strongly agree” or “agree” (46.15%: 15.38% +30.77%) and “disagree” or “strongly disagree” (34.62%: 23.08% + 11.54%). The reason may be is different teachers assessed them during different periods.

There are just 10% (10% + 0%) of the Chinese students who choose “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. This can show the final assessment of learning Chinese is very important in higher education in China.

(4) From the data of the eleventh statement “In general, the assessment is carried out during the semester”, I can see that just 7.7% (3.85% + 3.85%) Portuguese students and 6.67% (6.67% + 0%) Chinese students choose “disagree” or “strongly disagree”. It shows that both in Portugal and in China, the assessment of Chinese learning in higher education is carried out during the semester in general.

(5) From the data of the twelfth statement “In general, the assessment is carried out whenever I perform a task or activity”, I can find that the data of the Portuguese students’ choices and the Chinese students’ choices are in complete accordance substantially. There are 69.32% (29.62% + 42.31%) of the Portuguese students who choose the answer “strongly agree” or “agree”. It means that assessment of Chinese learning in higher education in Portugal is often carried out whenever they perform a task or activity.

The number of students that choose “strongly agree” and “agree” of the Portuguese students is bigger than Chinese. There are 53.33% (10% + 43.33%) of the Chinese students who choose the answer.

Table 21– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 8-12)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
8. In general, the assessment is carried out at predetermined times throughout the period.	15.38 %	16.67 %	23.08 %	43.33 %	11.54 %	23.33 %	30.77 %	16.67 %	19.23 %	0 %
9 In general, only there is assessment in the beginning of the semester.	7.69 %	10 %	0 %	36.67 %	19.23 %	46.67 %	23.08 %	6.67 %	50 %	0 %
10. In general, only there is assessment at the end of semester.	15.38 %	13.33 %	30.77 %	26.67 %	19.23 %	50 %	23.08 %	10 %	11.54 %	0 %
11. In general, the assessment is carried out during the semester.	46.15 %	20 %	34.62 %	30 %	11.54 %	43.33 %	3.85 %	6.67 %	3.85 %	0 %
12. In general, the assessment is carried out whenever I perform a task or activity.	26.92 %	10 %	42.31 %	43.33 %	11.54 %	43.33 %	19.23 %	3.33 %	0 %	0 %

As far as thirteenth to fifteenth statements, I can find that the data of the Portuguese and Chinese students' choices are in complete accordance most substantially:

(1) From the data of the thirteenth statement "Assessment is fairer when it allows me to apply knowledge in real contexts", I can see that 81.23% (46.61% +

34.62%) Portuguese students and 83.33% (53.33% + 30%) Chinese students choose the “strongly agree” or “agree”. This statement has the highest degree of their answers. It can be known that both in Portugal and in China, the assessment of Chinese learning in higher education is fairer when it allows students to apply knowledge in real contexts.

(2) From the data of the fourteenth statement “Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive/ scientific)”, 73.33% (34.62% + 26.92%) of the Portuguese students and 60% (16.67% + 43.33%) of the Chinese students choose the “strongly agree” or “agree”. This statement has the highest degree of their answers (less than the thirteenth statement).

(3) From the data of the fifteenth statement “Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.)”, there are 42.31% (19.23% + 23.08%) Portuguese students and 60% (26.67% + 33.33%) Chinese students who choose “strongly agree” or “agree” options. This statement has a nearly high degree of their answers (It is though less than the thirteenth and the fourteenth statements. There are also 34.62% Portuguese students and 33.33% of Chinese students who choose “uncertain”). It can be known that both in Portugal and in China, the assessment of Chinese learning in higher education is fairer when it allows the students to develop theoretical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.).

Table 22– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 13-15)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
13. Assessment is more fair when allow me to apply knowledge in real contexts.	46.15 %	53.33 %	34.62 %	30 %	7.69 %	13.33 %	3.85 %	3.33 %	7.69 %	0 %

	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
14. Assessment is more fair when allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive/ scientific).	34.62 %	16.67 %	26.92 %	43.33 %	26.92 %	36.67 %	0%	3.33 %	11.54 %	0 %
15. Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.).	19.23 %	26.67 %	23.08 %	33.33 %	34.62 %	33.33 %	7.69 %	6.67 %	15.38 %	0 %

The sixteenth to eighteenth statements focus on two kinds of assessment methods: traditional assessment methods and alternative assessment methods. I can find that the data of the Portuguese students' choices and the Chinese students' choices are in complete accordance and corresponded fairly so closely:

(1) From the data of the sixteenth statement, I could find that about 50% of the students strongly agree or strongly agree with this statement, but there are also more than 40% students who choose "uncertain". The data show that although traditional assessment methods get a lot of recognition from the students and this kind of assessment methods are often used in assessment, it is also very easy to found the disadvantages by the students, sometimes the effect of transitional assessment methods are not obvious.

(2) From the data of the seventeenth statement, I could see that nearly 50% students strongly agree or agree with this statement, but there are also from 30% - 40% students choosing "uncertain". The data show that in the field of leading to more effective and fairer assessment of learning, alternative assessment methods can give the students much influence, but sometimes the influence is not very

obvious.

(3) From the data of the eighteenth statement, I can find that just 3.85% Portuguese students disagree with it and there is no Chinese students disagreeing with it. At the same time, about 70% students strongly agree or agree with this statement. It means that in the field of allowing the development of the students' critical thinking, the alternative assessment methods make a large proactive effect for the students and it has very obvious advantages according to students' views.

Table 23– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 16-18)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
16. Traditional assessment methods (tests or examinations) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	7.69 %	23.33 %	30.77 %	30 %	42.31 %	43.33 %	11.54 %	3.33 %	7.69 %	0 %
17. Alternative assessment methods (portfolio, project) lead to more effective and fairer assessment of learning.	7.69 %	13.33 %	38.46 %	36.67 %	30.77 %	43.33 %	19.23 %	6.67 %	3.85 %	0 %
18. Alternative assessment methods (e.g., portfolio, practical work) allow the development of my critical thinking.	23.08 %	13.33 %	46.15 %	56.67 %	26.92 %	30 %	3.85 %	0 %	0%	0 %

The statements of the nineteenth and twentieth statement are in order to investigate in the students' options how many methods the teacher should use at

least for a fair assessment.

Let us see the data. There are 84.62% (50% + 34.62%) Portuguese students and 76.67% (36.67% + 40%) Chinese students who choose “strongly agree” or “agree” with the nineteenth statement. However, there are 50% (23.08% + 26.92%) Portuguese students and 63.34% (16.67% + 46.67%) Chinese students who choose “strongly agree” or “agree” in regard to the twentieth statement. The result can be shown that there are more students agreeing with the nineteenth statement than the twentieth. So it seems that it is better that teachers should use at least two different methods for a fairer assessment.

Table 24– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 19-20)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
19. In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods.	50 %	36.67 %	34.62 %	40 %	11.54 %	20 %	3.85 %	3.33 %	0 %	0 %
20. Teachers should use at least one assessment method for a fairer assessment.	23.08 %	16.67 %	26.92 %	46.67 %	30.77 %	33.33 %	11.54 %	3.33 %	7.69 %	0 %

The statements of the twenty-first and twenty-second statement are in order to investigate which situation can allows the students to devote more hours.

From the data of the twenty-first and twenty-second statement, I can understand that the data of the Portuguese students’ choices and the Chinese students’ choices are in complete accordance nearly. There are 50%-60% students choosing “strongly agree” or “agree”. It means that the two statements can happened usually. The different is: the students in Portugal agree more with the

twenty-second statement (“23.08% + 42.31% =65.39” > 26.67% + 30% =56.37%), and the students in China agree more with the twenty-first for the statement (“26.67% + 46.67% =73.34%” > 26.92% + 26.92% =53.84%).

Table 25– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 21-22)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
21. I devote more hours to the study when assessment is done through a project or portfolio.	26.92 %	26.67 %	26.92 %	46.67 %	23.08 %	23.33 %	19.23 %	3.33 %	3.85 %	0 %
22. Dedicate more hours to study when I do a practical work or project or a portfolio.	23.08 %	26.67 %	42.31 %	30 %	11.54 %	33.33 %	23.08 %	10 %	0 %	0 %

The statements of the twenty- third and twenty- fourth statement are in order to investigate which situation can make the students feel more confident.

Data show that there are more Portuguese students agreeing with the twenty-fourth statement (26.92% + 38.46% =65.3%) than with the twenty- third (7.96% + 38.46% =46.92%). However there are more Chinese students agreeing with the twenty- third statement (26.67% + 46.67% =73.34%) than with the twenty- fourth (26.67% + 30% =56.67%). So the result can tell us perhaps the students in China are better at tests/exams than the students in Portugal.

Table 26– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 23-24)

	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
23. I feel more confident when I am assessed though test or examination.	7.69 %	26.67 %	38.46 %	46.67 %	15.38 %	23.33 %	26.92 %	3.33 %	11.54 %	0 %
24. I feel more confident when I am assessed through the methods where I participate actively in the tasks.	26.92 %	26.67 %	38.46 %	30 %	30.77 %	33.33 %	3.85 %	10 %	0 %	0 %

The statements of the twenty- seventh and twenty- eighth statement are in order to investigate which assessment modes the students prefer; to be assessed individually or in a group. From the data of the two statements, I can understand that:

(1) There are more Portuguese students agreeing with the twenty- seventh statement (34.62% +42.31% =76.93%) than with the twenty- eighth (7.69% + 19.23%=26.92%).

(2) There are 56.67% (26.67% + 30%) Chinese students choosing “strongly agree” or “agree” with the twenty- eighth statement. That is more than the percentage of the Portuguese students (26.92%). This result shows that the students in China prefer to be assessed individually than the students in Portugal.

Table 27– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 27-28)

	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
27. I prefer to be assessed individually.	34.62 %	16.67 %	42.31 %	33.33 %	19.23 %	43.33 %	3.85 %	6.67 %	0%	0 %
28. I prefer to be assessed in a group.	7.69 %	26.67 %	19.23 %	30 %	23.08 %	36.67 %	19.23 %	6.67 %	30.77 %	0 %

The statements of the twenty- fifth and twenty- ninth statement are in order to investigate the relationship between evaluation and learning. From the data of the two statements, I can understand that:

There are many students agreeing with the twenty- ninth statement, there are 86.66% (73.33% + 13.33%) students choosing “strongly agree” or “agree” and nobody choose “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The result shows that assessment is fairer when it contributes to the deepening of approaches to learning.

Table 28– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 25 and 29)

	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
25. The assessment stimulates my learning.	38.46 %	26.67 %	26.92 %	46.67 %	30.77 %	23.33 %	3.85 %	3.33 %	0%	0 %
29. The assessment is fair when it contributes to the deepening approaches of (my) learning.	30.77 %	13.33 %	46.15 %	73.33 %	19.23 %	13.33 %	0%	0%	3.85 %	0 %

The twenty- sixth, thirtieth and thirty-first statements discuss the students’ attitude in regard to exams. According to the data, I can find that the data of the

Portuguese students' choices and the Chinese students' choices are in complete accordance most substantially:

(1) There are more than 50% students choosing "strongly agree" or "agree" and nobody chooses "disagree" or "strongly disagree". It means that both Portuguese and Chinese students agree with the twenty- sixth statement: only study the syllabi that are integrated in the tests.

(2) There are 76.93% (23.08% + 53.85%) Portuguese students and 60% (6.67% + 53.33%) Chinese students strongly agreeing or agreeing with the thirtieth statements, but there are just 34.62% (11.54% + 23.08%) of Portuguese students and 56.67% (26.67% + 30%) of Chinese students strongly agreeing or agreeing with the thirty-first statement. So in a word, the students agreed more with the thirtieth statement than with the thirty-first sentence. So, it seems that the best way for students to be prepared for exams is to study the content and do a lot of practical exercises by the students themselves.

Table 29– Data Comparison for Question 4 (statement 26, 30 and 31)

	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	P	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**	**P**	**C**
26. I only study the syllabus than integrate the tests.	11.54 %	26.67 %	34.62 %	30 %	38.46 %	33.33 %	15.38 %	10 %	0 %	0 %
30. When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a lot of practical exercises.	23.08 %	6.67%	53.85 %	53.33 %	11.54 %	40%	7.69%	0 %	3.85 %	0 %
31. Usually, I forget most of the content studied shortly after taking the exam.	11.54 %	13.33 %	23.08 %	30%	26.92 %	46.67 %	34.62 %	10 %	3.85 %	0 %

Secondly, let's see the data of the last question. There are differences between the answers of the students in Portugal and the students in China. According to this comparison, the students in Portugal pay more attention to the scientific and continuity of the assessment. But the students in China pay more attention to diversity of the assessment methods.

Final Considerations

At this point, I propose, in a synthetic way, the main conclusions of the study that I conducted and its implications. I also propose future research topics. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the main objective of this research was to understand the perceptions of higher education students about the assessment of Chinese learning. I chose to conduct a quantitative research in an exploratory way among two different universities from Portugal and China (Minho University and Nankai University). It allowed to: (1) Understand the perceptions of students about the assessment of Chinese learning. (2) Identify the methods of assessment used by teachers in different courses from the perspective of students. (3) Understand assessment practices in light of the experience of students. (4) Identify perceptions of students about the assessment process and its relationship with Chinese learning.

Through comprehensive analysis of the data obtained using the questionnaire survey and based on the objectives, I highlight the following aspects arising from the data.

4.1 About Purposes of Assessment

The purposes of assessment should be carried out with improving learning. Findings of the survey show that students are more willing to participate in the assessment like this: it has clear and objective assessment purposes, and helps them learning. It is said that the purposes of assessment is an interactive panel of experts was convened to work toward a consensus on the role of critical thinking in educational assessment and instruction (Peter, 1990), and it has been verified in this thesis. So I think different audiences have different needs for information about assessment and learning.

(1) Students need feedback on their performance so they know where they are doing well and where they need to place additional effort.

(2) Teachers need information about their students' understanding in order to make good decisions about what and how they teach.

(3) Parents need information about their students' learning progress so they know the areas where their students need additional support.

(4) School districts need information about students' learning so they can know were additional support for teachers and students may be needed.

(5) Both state and federal departments of education need to know about student performance in order to assess the educational status of students in the state/nation and know where additional funding and or program may be needed to help make improvements. (MacLellan, 2001)

In a word, I think assessment is integrally related to curriculum and instruction. Quality teachers use evidence of learning assessment to inform what they teach the curriculum and how they develop instruction.

4.2 About Modes of Assessment

Both the students from Portuguese university and from Chinese university think that the formative assessment and summative assessment are both very important in Chinese learning. It is said that formative assessment focuses on learners' learning process, and this information can be used by teachers as the basis for further work. Summative assessment is intended to measure learners' achievement (Dickin, 2000). But at the present stage, the summative assessment is being more valued in Chinese learning. And the students want the teacher to pay more attention to formative assessment, because it allows the assessment process in learning became fairer.

So I think the modes of assessment should use focus Group Debates. This mode of assessment is used during self and peer assessment. Here's how it works. In the assessment period students are given a weekly point of debate which is then discussed in focus groups. The students work in groups of 4 for 30 minutes at the end of 30 minutes, the groups split up and each student works privately at a desk.

Each student is given the name of one other person (named person) in their focus group. The identity of the named person is not revealed until this point. Against specific criteria, the student reflects on that person's contribution, annotating the mark sheet to provide exemplars to justify the rating given to each aspect. All completed papers are handed directly to the module tutor. Each student then reflects on their own contribution to the focus group, using the same criteria as before. The papers are handed to the module tutor. I think it is can became a good way to assess the learning

4.3 About Methods of Assessment

For the methods of assessment, both Portuguese students and Chinese students have similar views. Students' perceptions tend to value traditional and alternative methods of evaluation. As for the traditional evaluation methods and methods of alternative assessment, students have no answers at all clear in the sense that they allow or not learning more effective and fairer. So what we need to know is what approaches to learning are adopted by students and what are the expectations of students about the different methods of assessment, the proposed tasks and also What they do to choose from and what they choose not to in the response to the different assessment regimes which are introduced (Boud, 1995). However, most of the students who participated in this study state that alternative assessment methods, or so-called new assessment methods, allow the development of new learning and development of their critical thinking. Furthermore, the students said that they devote more hours to the study when they are assessed through an evaluation test type test or examination and that, when prepared for the exam, study the matter and solve practical exercises. However, these students do not have a consensus opinion in regard to dedicate more hours of study when the evaluation is performed using methods like project or portfolio. There also some students do not agree with the fact that they feel more confident when they are evaluated by test, stating, however, mostly, they feel more confident when they are evaluated by assessment methods

that actively participate in the tasks.

The choice of assessment methods should be aligned with the overall aims of the program, and may include the development of disciplinary skills (such as critical evaluation or problem solving) and support the development of vocational competencies (such as particular communication or team skills.) Hence, when choosing assessment items, it is useful to have one eye on the immediate task of assessing student learning in a particular unit of study, and another eye on the broader aims of the program and the qualities of the graduating student. Ideally this is something you do with your academic colleagues so there is a planned assessment strategy across a program. When considering assessment methods, it is particularly useful to think first about what qualities or abilities you are seeking to engender in the learners. The suggestions are:

(1) Thinking critically and making judgments. (Developing arguments, reflecting, evaluating, assessing, judging)

(2) Solving problems and developing plans. (Identifying problems, posing problems, defining problems, analyzing data, reviewing, designing experiments, planning, applying information)

(3) Performing procedures and demonstrating techniques. (Computation, taking readings, using equipment, following laboratory procedures, following protocols, carrying out instructions)

(4) Managing and developing oneself. (Working co-operatively, working independently, learning independently, being self-directed, managing time, managing tasks, organizing)

(5) Accessing and managing information. (Researching, investigating, interpreting, organizing information, reviewing and paraphrasing information, collecting data, searching and managing information sources, observing and interpreting)

(6) Demonstrating knowledge and understanding (Recalling, describing, reporting, recounting, recognizing, identifying, relating & interrelating)

(7) Designing, creating, performing. (Imagining, visualizing, designing,

producing, creating, innovating, performing)

(8) Communicating (One and two-way communication; communication within a group, verbal, written and non-verbal communication.) arguing, describing, advocating, interviewing, negotiating, presenting; using specific written forms. (Cook, 2001)

When choosing assessment methods, people tend to stay with he known or the "tried and true methods", because they seem to have academic respectability, or possibly because it was the way we were assessed as undergraduates ourselves. It often seems as if we are turning them into "essay producing machines" or "examination junkies". When choosing methods it is important to offer variety to learners in the way they demonstrate their learning, and to help them to develop a well-rounded set of abilities by the time they graduate.

4.4 About Assessment of Chinese Learning in Higher Education

As regards the assessment times in general, students said that it is carried out a diagnostic assessment of Chinese learning. However, they state that it occurs at predetermined times during the semester, throughout the semester and always performing a task or activity. The students from two universities consider that the assessment is fairer when it allows them to encourage the application of knowledge in real contexts, when it allows them to develop the skills and techniques while still allows them to simultaneously develop the technical skills and cross. They think that soft skills are important in the context of higher education "if we choose not to assess general transferable skills, then it is an unambiguous sign that promoting them is not seen to be an important part of work and of our program" (Knight,1995).

(1) In Portugal, assessment of Chinese learning in higher education is not very mature and systematic, because it didn't have a long time to carry out this field. So In the future, I think that in the process of Chinese learning in higher education teachers should try different assessment methods and models. Students should also complete

all of their assessment carefully and finished on time. I want to give the assessment in Chinese learning in higher education a key word is: “attempt”.

(2) In China, assessment of Chinese learning in higher education is more systematic and regular, because it has a longer time to carry out this field. So in the future, I think that in the process of Chinese learning in higher education, teachers should try different assessment methods and models. Teachers should actively innovation without the bondage of inherent methods and models. Teachers also should pay attention to the students’ class performance, and regular grade. Students should cultivate the habit of self-assessment, and do not pursue the individual assessment scores blindly.

4.5 Suggestions for Further Research

In some sense, this study provides some useful data and ideas for future research. For example, it would be important to promote among teachers in higher education training on methods and evaluation processes and their implications. Another implication of this research is that students are not informed about the assessment methodology adopted by teachers. Higher Education should have explicit criteria, methods and practices of assessment for learning, so that thereby the students know why and how it is being evaluated. And this research show us the situation of Chinese learning in Portugal and China, but more needs to be in research in this field as well as in other aspects, for example, other languages learning, Chinese learning in other countries or other schools.

The above is the entire contents of my thesis. I hope this thesis can allow more people to understand something about assessment of Chinese learning in higher education. I also hope this thesis can leave some useful data for other researchers in the future. There are some problems still not solved. For example, the concrete and meticulous reasons that lead to some differences in the two different countries in regard to students’ perceptions, and what is the best way to combine the traditional

methods and alternative methods in Chinese learning, and so on. So I intend to carry on the research, and I do hope I can put out new research results in the near future.

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Appendix

Universidade do Minho

Instituto de Educação

Questionnaire about Assessment Practices in Chinese learning

This questionnaire aims to get to know the ideas and experiences of students about assessment in Chinese learning course. It is based upon the work of Pereira (2011). The questionnaire is anonymous, to ensure the confidentiality of the data, which serve only for research purposes. Your support is very important.

Block I

1.1 Sex: Male□ Female□

1.2 Age: _____

1.3 Course:

Undergraduate (Bachelor): _____ Grade: _____

Graduate (bachelor): _____

Graduate (Master): _____

1.4 The year you attend the course: _____

Block II

Take into account your experience as a student, and please identity what are the features that you associate the most with assessment?

Use the scale: none, a little, some, alot

	None	A little	Some	A lot
1.1 grades/marks				
1.2 power				
1.3 conflict				
1.4 reflection				
1.5 dissimilarity/ injustice				
1.6 success				
1.7 participation				
1.8 inequality				
1.9 fear				
1.10 verification of knowledge				
1.11 support				
1.12 mediation				
1.13 anxiety				
1.14 control				
1.15 tests/exams				
1.16 certification				
1.17 imposition				
1.18 learning				
Others, what?				

2.According to your experience as a student doing in Chinese learning course, what kind of assessment methods are most used by teachers in the course?

Use the scale: NU=never used, UL=used a litte, UE=use some extent, AU=always used

	NU	UL	UE	AU
2.1. Written Tests/exams				
2.2. Oral Tests				
2.3. Individual written work				
2.4. Group written work				
2.5. Individual portfolios				

2.6. Portfolios in group				
2.7.Resolution of practical work / individual experiments				
2.8.Resolution of practical work / group experiments				
2.9. Individual project work				
2.10 Group project work				
2.11 Individual reports				
2.12 Group reports				
2.13. Individual written reflections				
2.14. Critical reviews of individual texts				
2.15. Critical reviews of group texts				
2.16. Oral presentations in group				
2.17. Individual oral presentations				
Others, what?				

3. According to your experience, what assessment criteria are most valued by teachers?

4. Please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements that follow.

Use the scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Uncertain, D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.1.The assessment is fairer when there is self-assessment.					
4.2.The assessment is fairer when there is peer-assessment.					
4.3.The assessment is fairer when there is both self and peer assessment.					
4.4. In general, the assessment methodology is decided by the teacher.					
4.5. In general, the assessment methodology is negotiated or discussed with students.					
4.6. In general, I am asked to perform a self-assessment.					

4.7. In general, I usually participate in the assessment of my colleagues (peer-assessment).					
4.8. In general, the assessment is carried out at predetermined times throughout the period.					
4.9 In general, only there is assessment in the beginning of the semester.					
4.10. In general, only there is assessment at the end of semester.					
4.11. In general, the assessment is carried out during the semester.					
4.12. In general, the assessment is carried out whenever I perform a task or activity.					
4.13. Assessment is more fair when allow me to apply knowledge in real contexts.					
4.14. Assessment is more fair when allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific).					
4.15. Assessment is fairer when it allows me to develop my technical skills (cognitive / scientific) and my soft skills (search and selection of information, teamwork, etc.).					
4.16. Traditional assessment methods (tests or examinations) lead to more effective and faire assessment of learning.					
4.17. Alternative assessment methods (portfolio, project) lead to more effective and faire assessment of learning.					
4.18. Alternative assessment methods (eg, portfolio, practical work) allow the development of my critical thinking.					
4.19. In order assessment to be fairer, teachers should use at least two different methods.					
4.20. Teachers should use at least one assessment method for a fairer assessment.					
4.21. I devote more hours to the study when assessment is done through a project or portfolio.					
4.22. Dedicate more hours to study when I do a practical work or project or a portfolio.					
4.23. I feel more confident when I am assessed though test or examination.					
4.24. I feel more confident when I am assessed through the methods where I participate actively in the tasks.					
4.25. The assessment stimulates my learning.					
4.26. I only study the syllabus than integrate the tests.					
4.27. I prefer to be assessed individually.					
4.28. I prefer to be assessed in a group.					
4.29. The assessment is fair when it contributes to the deepening approaches of (my) learning.					
4.30. When I prepare for an exam I study the content and do a					

lot of practical exercises.					
4.31. Usually, I forget most of the content studied shortly after taking the exam.					

5. In your opinion, what makes the assessment a fairer process? Why?

If you want to add any comments on the topics covered, please use the space below (you can use overleaf).

Thank you for your collaboration

Zhang Yuyu